SUPERMAN
DC
NATIONAL COMICS

BATMAN

APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

DEC.
NO. 217

15¢

TAKE A LAST LOOK, ALFRED--

THEN SEAL UP THE BATCAVE... FOREVER!

BATMAN

Art: Irv NOVICK & DICK GIORDANO
Story: FRANK ROBBINS

"ONE BULLET TOO MANY!"

A DESPERATELY LONELY DAY IN THE LIFE OF ***BRUCE WAYNE***, GUARDIAN AND FRIEND TO YOUNG ***DICK GRAYSON***... A DAY ALWAYS DREADED... ALWAYS EXPECTED ...BUT NEVER QUITE PREPARED FOR...

ALL HERE---AS IT ***USED*** TO ***BE!*** BUT---NO LONGER THE SAME...

STOP

ONE WAY

S-217

DIDN'T THINK I'D TAKE IT ***THIS*** HARD!

DICK GRAYSON MONITOR GOTHAM HIGH SCHOOL OF CATHOLICISM 1969

YOU NEVER KNOW--- TILL IT'S ***TOO LATE!***

BATMAN, No. 217, December, 1969. Published monthly, with the exception of April and October by NATIONAL PERIODICAL PUBLICATIONS, INC., 2nd & Dickey Sts., SPARTA, ILL. 62286. Editorial, Executive offices, 909 THIRD AVENUE, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10022. Julius Schwartz, Editor, Carmine Infantino, Editorial Director. SECOND CLASS POSTAGE PAID AT SPARTA, ILL. under the act of March 3, 1879. No subscriptions. For advertising rates address Richard A. Feldon & Co., 41 E. 42nd St., New York, N.Y. 10017. Copyright ©National Periodical Publications, Inc., 1969. All rights reserved under International and Pan-American Copyright Conventions. The stories, characters and incidents mentioned in this magazine are entirely fictional. No actual persons, living or dead, are intended or should be inferred.

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SAME MESSY HABITS---EVEN TO THE END! SLOPPY KID--- AND I'M :SNIFFLE: GETTING EVEN SLOPPIER!

GOT TO FACE UP TO IT-- NO MATTER HOW IT HURTS! FROM NOW ON, *EVERYTHING* IS GOING TO BE *DIFFERENT*---IT *HAS* TO BE...

HARUMPH :SNUFFLE: SORRY TO BREAK IN ON YOUR---*OUR* PRIVATE SORROWS, MASTER BRUCE, BUT...

YES, ALFRED--- WHAT IS IT?

ALL :SNIFF: ALL IS IN READINESS, SIR! IT IS TIME TO GO DOWN...

AW, C'MON, FELLAS--- WE'RE *ALL* GROWN UP NOW! STOP ACTING LIKE YOU'RE ATTENDING MY---*FUNERAL!*

I KNOW IT'S GOING TO BE PRETTY ROUGH ON YOU GUYS--- IN THE ***BEGINNING!*** GUESS IT'S KINDA HARD FOR YOU TO DIG THAT ONLY ***YESTERDAY...***

...I WAS ***YOUR*** "YOUNG MASTER DICK," ALFIE...

...AND ***YOUR*** "KID WHO NEEDED A BIG-BROTHER-IMAGE," BRUCE...

TAXI

BUT---I'M A ***MAN*** NOW!

'LEAST---THAT'S WHAT MY DRAFT-CARD SAYS...

...PLUS MY ACCEPTANCE AT ***HUDSON UNIVERSITY!***

SO...I'D PREFER TO GO TO THE AIRPORT---***ALONE...***

I--I HATE--- ***LONG*** GOOD-BYES!

AND SUDDENLY A BIG, UNDER-OCCUPIED *WAYNE MANOR* BECOMES VASTER... EMPTIER!

ALFRED, YOU KNOW ALL *THIS* JUST ISN'T GOING TO WORK ANY MORE--- NOT THE WAY IT USED TO BE!

I---I KNOW, MASTER BRUCE--- IT'S JUST TOO BIG FOR THE TWO OF US!

AND WITH YOUNG MASTER DI--ER... *MASTER* GRAYSON... COMING HOME ONLY ON OCCASIONAL WEEK ENDS AND HOLIDAYS---

AS THEY TAKE THE SECRET *BATCAVE* ELEVATOR...

WELL, WE CAN'T SAY THIS CAME AS A *SURPRISE!* I'VE THOUGHT A LOT--- PREPARED...

IT'S TIME WE *ALL* STARTED A *NEW* WAY OF LIFE! A NEW WAY OF *EVERYTHING!*

M-MASTER BRUCE-- YOU DON'T MEAN-- YOU *CAN'T!* B-BATM---

YES---*BATMAN TOO!*

DICK'S LEAVING BROUGHT HOME THE STARK FACT THAT OUR *PRIVATE* WORLD HAS CHANGED!

WE'RE IN GRAVE DANGER OF BECOMING---*OUTMODED! OBSOLETE* DODOS OF THE *MOD WORLD* OUTSIDE!

OUR BEST CHANCE FOR SURVIVAL IS TO---*CLOSE UP SHOP* HERE!

TAKE A LONG--POSSIBLY *LAST* LOOK, ALFRED--- THE *BATCAVE* IS DESTINED TO JOIN ALL THE CAVES OF HISTORY HOUSING THE *EXTINCT PAST!*

OH-H... *NO,* MASTER BRUCE! H-HOW WILL--ER--WE FUNCTION AS THE CRIME-FIGHTERS OF *OLD?*

BY BECOMING *NEW*--- *STREAMLINING* THE OPERATION! BY DISCARDING THE PARAPHERNALIA OF THE PAST...

... AND FUNCTIONING WITH THE CLOTHES ON OUR BACKS... THE WITS IN OUR HEADS!

BY *RE-ESTABLISHING* THIS *TRADEMARK* OF THE *"OLD" BATMAN* --- TO STRIKE *NEW FEAR* INTO THE NEW BREED OF GANGSTERISM SWEEPING THE WORLD!

TODAY THIS NEW BREED OF RAT--USES THE MODERN WEAPONS OF...

... *"PHONEY* RESPECTABILITY" --- "BIG BUSINESS *FRONTS"*-- "LEGAL *COVER-UPS"*--AND HIDES IN THE FORTRESS TOWERS OF *GOTHAM'S* METROPOLIS!

WE'RE MOVING OUT OF THIS SUBURBAN SANCTUARY, TO LIVE IN THE HEART OF THAT SPRAWLING URBAN BLIGHT---TO DIG THEM OUT WHERE THEY LIVE AND FATTEN ON THE INNOCENT!

LATER...

I--I CAN'T BEAR TO LOOK BACK, MASTER BRUCE!

DON'T, ALFRED--- THE FUTURE IS AHEAD!

A LONG DRIVE INTO THE CENTER OF GOTHAM, AND...

OUR NEW HOME--WAYNE FOUNDATION!

AND THIS PENTHOUSE IS OUR "DIGS"--- CONVERTED FROM FORMER EXECUTIVE OFFICES!

MUCH BETTER BACHELOR ACCOMMODATIONS, SIR---SIMPLER TO KEEP IN ORDER! I APPROVE...

GLAD YOU DO, ALF! WE MAY HAVE TO DO A LOT OF "LEANING ON EACH OTHER" IN DAYS TO COME!

ESPECIALLY SINCE NOW--AS BRUCE WAYNE--I'LL BE KEEPING A CLOSER EYE ON FOUNDATION AFFAIRS BY DAY...

... AND "SOCKIN' IT TO 'EM" BY NIGHT!

AND THIS IS WHERE BATMAN AND THE WAYNE FOUNDATION START TO JOIN FORCES! READ IT, ALF---ONE OF A SERIES OF CRUSADING ARTICLES!

"V.A.--VICTIMS ANONYMOUS--- PART 3, BY MARLA MANNING..."

CONTINUED ON 2ND PAGE FOLLOWING.

"...LATEST VICTIM IN THE UNSUNG CASE-HISTORY OF INNOCENTS IN THE WAR AGAINST CRIME---*DR. SUSAN FIELDING*, PEDIATRICIAN..."

"...AND WIFE OF *DR. JONAH FIELDING*, SLAIN LAST WEEK WHILE TREATING AN UNKNOWN GUN-SHOT PATIENT! IN THIS UNSOLVED TRAGEDY..."

"*UNSOLVED*"--- THE CRIMINAL *UNPUNISHED!* THINK OF IT, ALF...

...HOW MANY UNDERWORLD KILLINGS--MAIMINGS ---IN THIS VAST CITY LEAVE A TRAIL OF INNOCENT VICTIMS OF THE "VICTIM"! WIVES--MOTHERS--CHILDREN...

...MANY LEFT WITHOUT ANY MEANS OF SUPPORT! IT'S THE GREAT *UNPUBLICIZED TRAGEDY* OF OUR TIME!

WE SUFFER GREAT PAIN OVER *TRUE* JUSTICE---"RIGHTS OF THE INDIVIDUAL"---"INNOCENT UNTIL PROVEN GUILTY"...

...ALL FOR THE *ACCUSED* PARTIES! BUT WHAT ABOUT THE *"PROVEN"* INNOCENT--THE *VICTIMS?*

INNOCENT VICTIMS SUCH AS *DICK* AND *I* WERE--WHEN *OUR* PARENTS WERE BRUTALLY SLAIN! THEIR *DEATHS* WERE THE *BIRTHS* OF---*BATMAN* AND *ROBIN!*

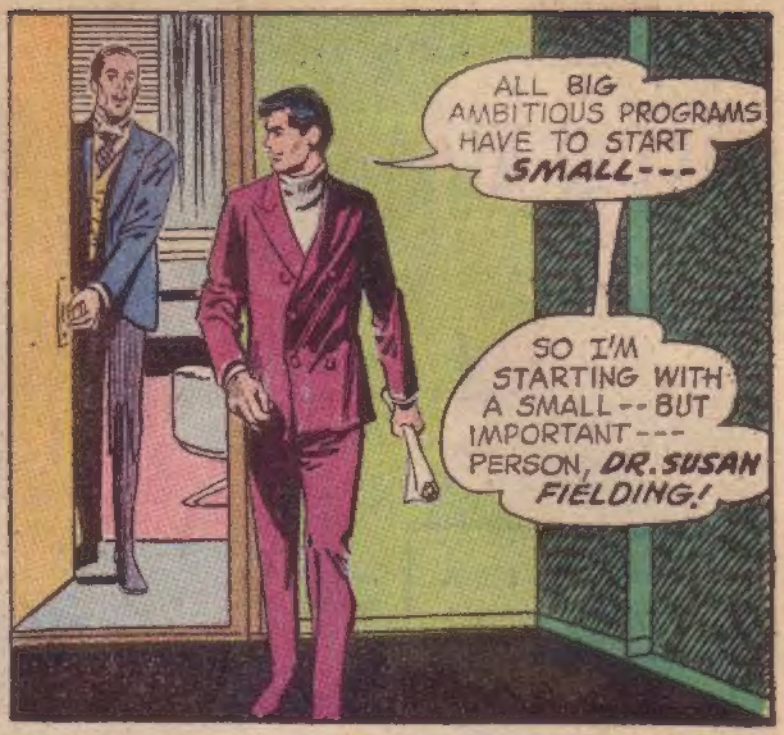
WE WERE IN THE FORTUNATE POSITION TO CLAIM JUSTICE FOR *OURSELVES*---BUT WHAT OF THE LESS FORTUNATES?

THAT *IS* A DISTURBING THOUGHT, SIR! WHAT ABOUT THEM?

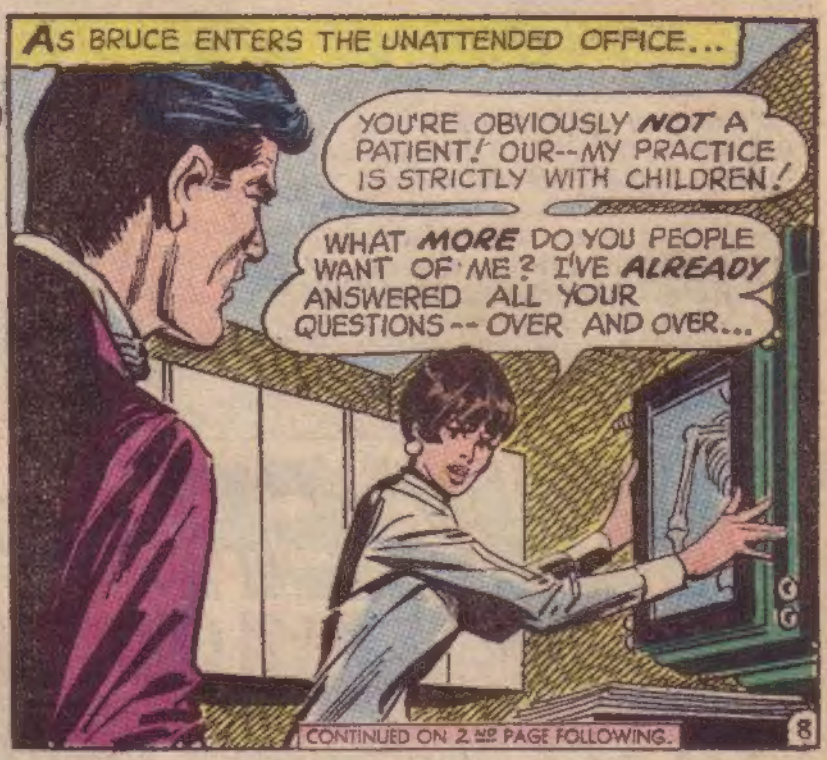
PRECISELY WHAT *WAYNE FOUNDATION* INTENDS TO CORRECT! AND UNTIL WE CAN ARRANGE A *LOBBY* IN THE *STATE CAPITAL* TO CAMPAIGN FOR PUBLIC FUNDS...

...WE'RE SETTING UP A *SPECIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM* HERE TO AID THESE PEOPLE!

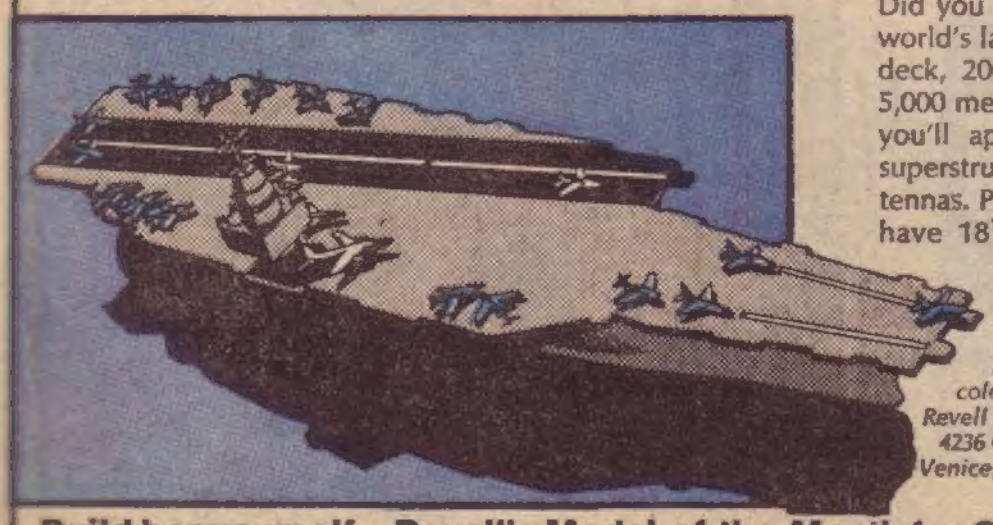
WORTHY IDEA, SIR! WHILE THESE POOR VICTIMS ARE FORGOTTEN BY THE PUBLIC---TO *US* THEY'RE *VERY IMPORTANT PEOPLE! V.I.P.'S,* YOU MIGHT SAY!



A SHORT TIME LATER...
"DR. S. FIELDING ...DR. J. FIELDING"--- A HUSBAND-WIFE TEAM ON A MODEST NEIGHBORHOOD LEVEL!
POOR GAL, THE TRAGEDY'S SO FRESH--- HIS SHINGLE IS STILL UP!


AS BRUCE ENTERS THE UNATTENDED OFFICE...
YOU'RE OBVIOUSLY NOT A PATIENT! OUR--MY PRACTICE IS STRICTLY WITH CHILDREN!
WHAT MORE DO YOU PEOPLE WANT OF ME? I'VE ALREADY ANSWERED ALL YOUR QUESTIONS--OVER AND OVER...
CONTINUED ON 2ND PAGE FOLLOWING.
8

BE ENTERPRISING!



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SORRY, MRS.---DR. FIELDING... I'M AFRAID YOU'VE GOT ME PEGGED WRONG! I'M *NOT* FROM THE POLICE:--OR THE D.A.'S OFFICE...

THEN IF YOU'RE FROM THE COLLECTION-AGENCY---DUNNING ME FOR THIS UNPAID-FOR MEDICAL EQUIPMENT...

...YOU COULD AT LEAST WAIT TILL THE---THE FLOWERS WILTED ON HIS GRAVE!

PERHAPS IF YOU WEREN'T SO FULL OF *SELF-PITY*--- YOU COULD AID YOUR HUSBAND'S MEMORY *MORE!*

W-WHAT...?

SWA-AP

WHAT RIGHT HAVE *YOU...*

MAYBE *NONE!* BUT *THIS* WAY, YOU'RE NO GOOD TO *YOURSELF...*

...OR *HIM!* ARE YOU?

≥SOB≤ N-NOT...ONE... DARN BIT! ≥SOB!≤

I---I SHOULDN'T SOB BE DOING THIS! I SOB DON'T EVEN *KNOW* YOU!

I COULD BE A *FRIEND*-- IF YOU'LL *LET* ME!

SNIFF THANKS! WHO... WHO ARE YOU?

BRUCE WAYNE --HEAD OF *WAYNE FOUNDATION!* WE WANT TO AID PEOPLE LIKE YOU--- VICTIMS OF INJUSTICE...

I DON'T NEED YOUR *CHARITY!* AND WITH ALL YOUR WEALTH --YOU CAN'T BRING JONAH BACK!

BUT *YOU* HAVE A FUTURE AHEAD OF YOU, *SERVING* MANKIND---*IF* YOU WANT TO FACE IT!

WE'RE NOT "DO-GOODERS" --- WE WANT TO *HELP!*

JUST BEFORE, YOU INDICATED THAT YOU'RE IN *DEBT!* BOTH OF YOU HAD BEEN OPERATING ON A SHOE-STRING, I GATHER?

WE WORKED OUR WAY THROUGH MEDICAL SCHOOL, WHERE WE MET-- SET UP JOINT-PRACTICE HERE WHEN WE MARRIED...

...SCRIMPING FOR OUR NEXT TEN YEARS TOGETHER TO BUY PROPER EQUIPMENT...TO TEND TO OUR LITTLE PATIENTS' NEEDS, *PROPERLY!* BUT *NOW*...

NOW THE CREDITORS WON'T PUT *SENTIMENT* BEFORE *CASH*, EH?

DR. J FIELDING
DR. S FIELDING

SO SUPPOSE *WAYNE FOUNDATION* EXTENDS YOU AN INDEFINITE-PERIOD *LOAN* WITH *NO* INTEREST CHARGES? *THAT* WOULDN'T BE CHARITY---

BUT IT WOULD MAKE YOU AWFUL DARN --- FOOLS, I GUESS!

BUT, YES ---*YES!* I ACCEPT YOUR OFFER!

THEN *THAT'S* SETTLED! I WISH *WE* COULD FIND YOUR HUSBAND'S *KILLER* AS EASILY!

HOW COULD *YOU*--- WHEN EVEN THE *POLICE* ARE UP AGAINST A BLANK WALL?

I HAVE A---FRIEND--WHO SPECIALIZES IN "BLANK-WALL CASES" --- *BATMAN!*

YOU *KNOW* HIM? BUT WHY WOULD *HE*--- I MEAN, THIS CASE IS SO *UNIMPORTANT* TO SUCH A BRILLIANT CRIME-FIGHTER ...

YOU DON'T KNOW HIM--- LIKE *I* DO, SUSAN! *ALL* HUMANITY IS IMPORTANT TO *BATMAN*--*ANY* LIFE, NO MATTER HOW INSIGNIFICANT IN THE PUBLIC EYE!

CARE TO TELL ME ABOUT IT?

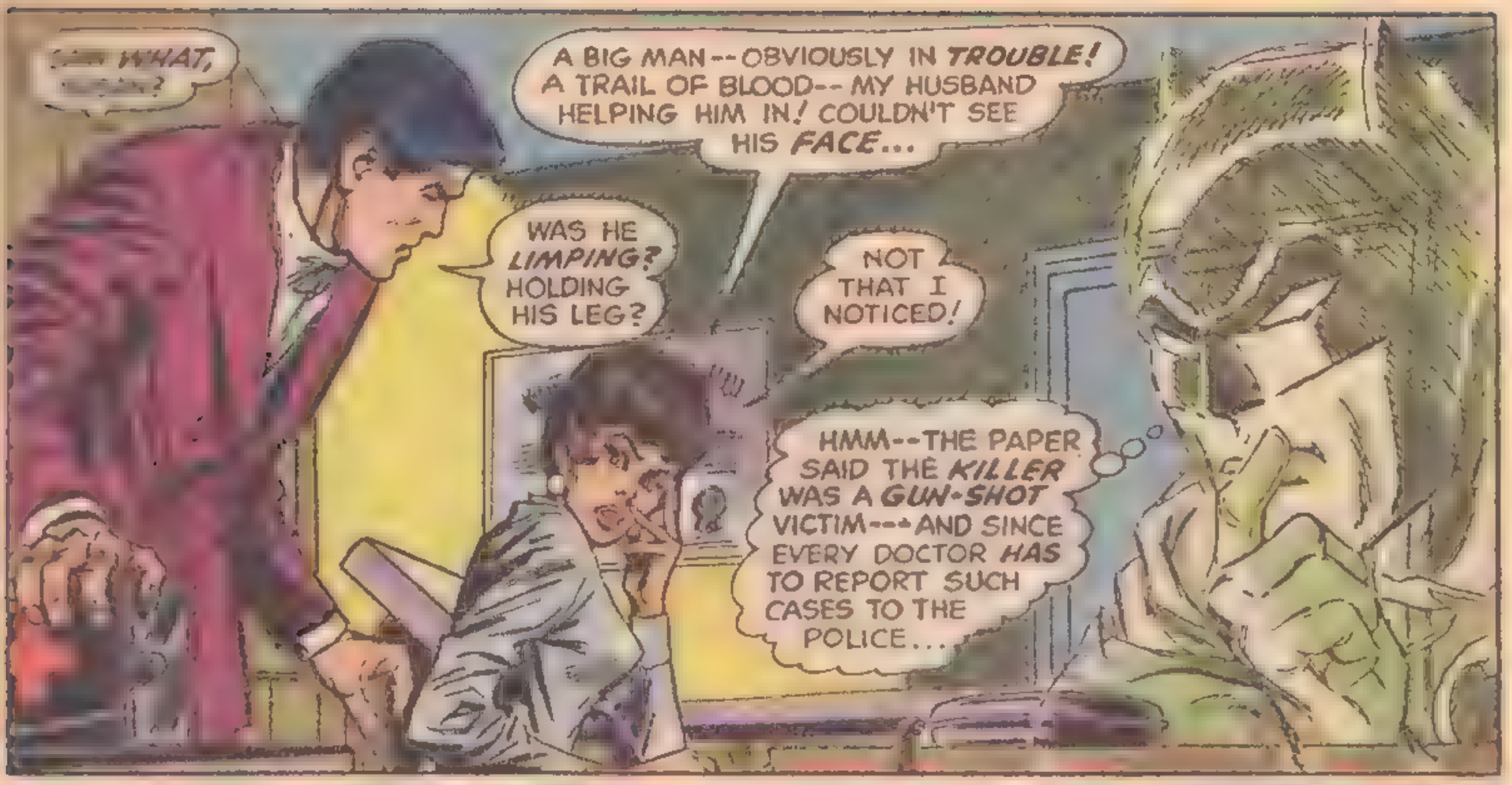
JONAH AND I SPLIT OUR OFFICE-HOURS-- I RAN AN *AFTER-HOURS* SESSION FOR WORKING-MOTHERS AND THEIR CHILDREN...

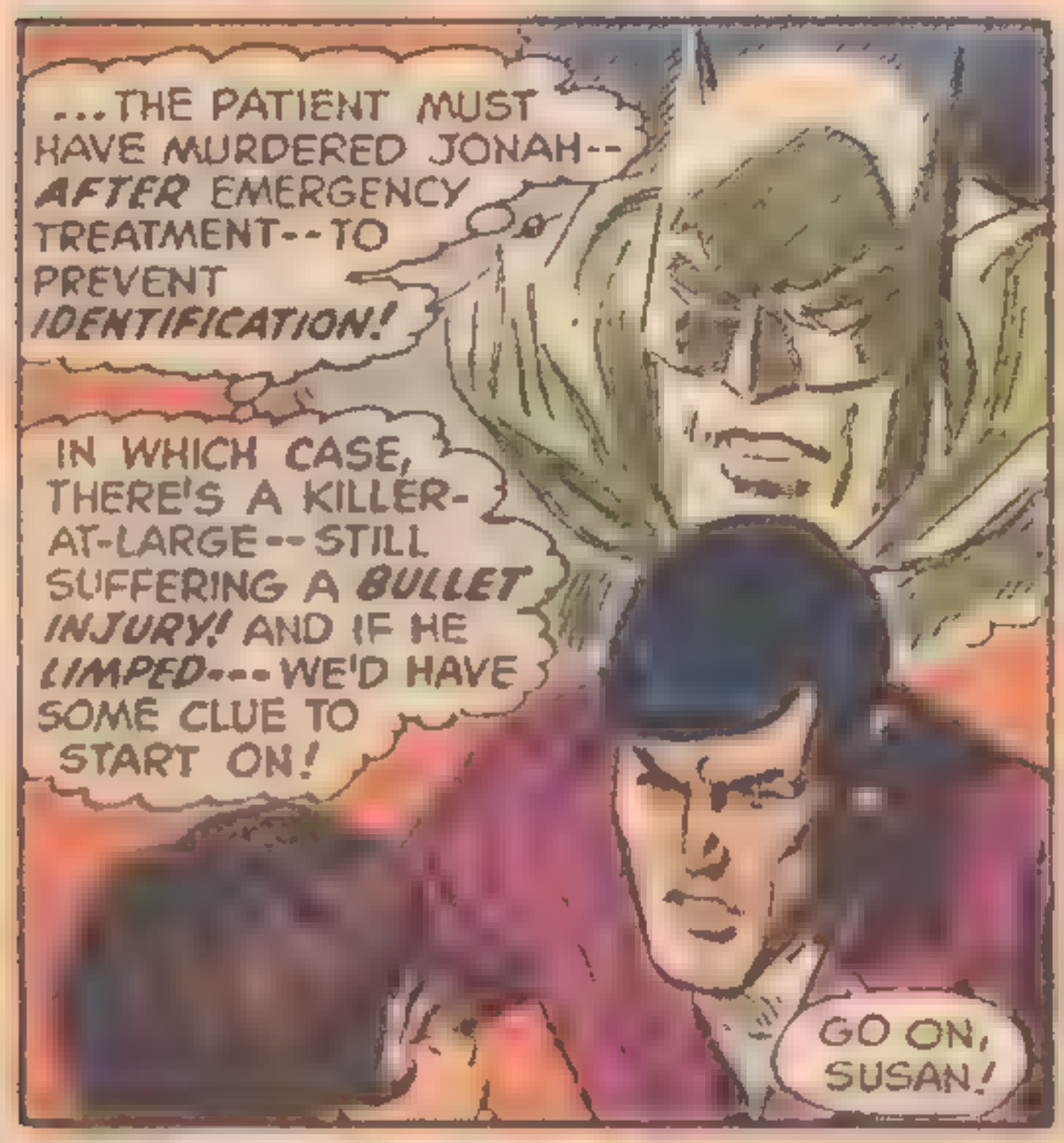
"ON THAT...FATAL..NIGHT, I HAD JUST TURNED IN, EXHAUSTED FROM A FULL SCHEDULE ...WHEN THERE CAME THAT INSISTENT RINGING OF OUR FRONT-DOOR BELL..."

WHO COULD *THAT* BE?

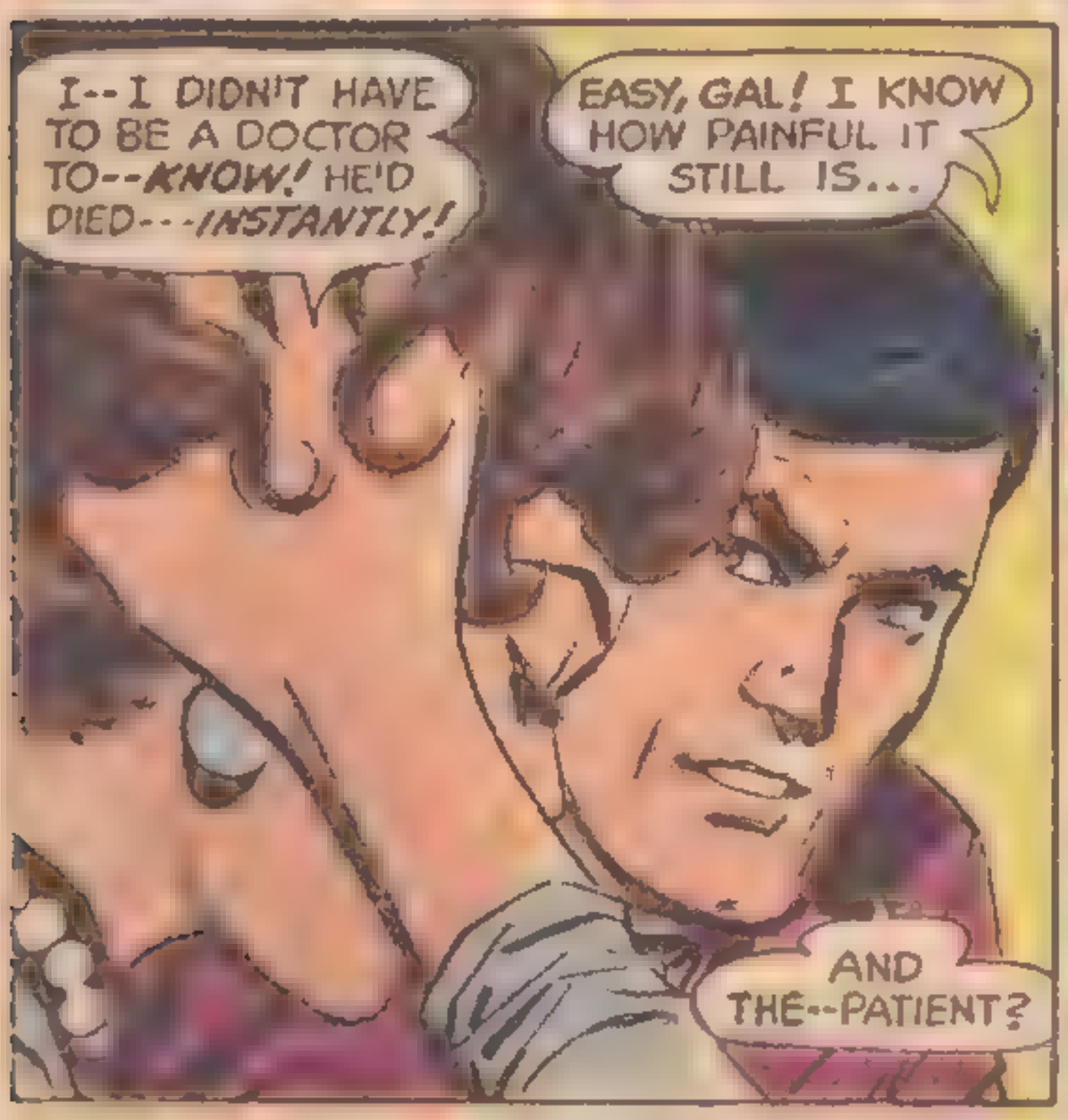
YOU'VE *HAD* IT, HONEY--- *I'LL* TAKE IT! PROBABLY SOME HYSTERICAL MOTHER WITH AN "EMERGENCY" CASE OF STOMACHITIS---

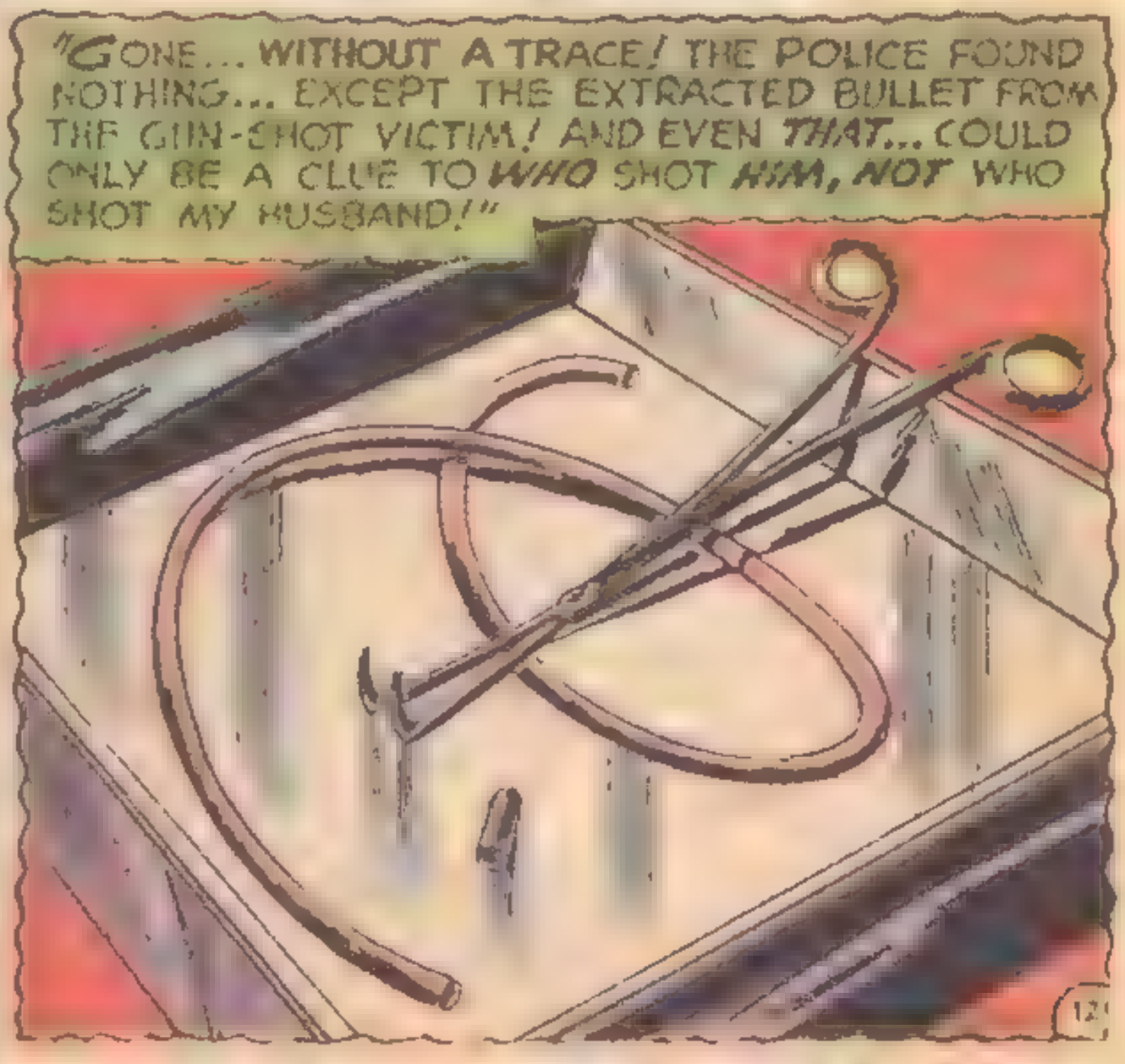
"JUST COULDN'T RESIST CHECKING... EITHER MY PROFESSIONAL TRAINING... OR PLAIN WOMAN'S CURIOSITY! AND I SAW..."


...WHAT, SUSAN?
A BIG MAN--OBVIOUSLY IN TROUBLE! A TRAIL OF BLOOD--MY HUSBAND HELPING HIM IN! COULDN'T SEE HIS FACE...
WAS HE LIMPING? HOLDING HIS LEG?
NOT THAT I NOTICED!
HMM--THE PAPER SAID THE KILLER WAS A GUN-SHOT VICTIM---AND SINCE EVERY DOCTOR HAS TO REPORT SUCH CASES TO THE POLICE...


...THE PATIENT MUST HAVE MURDERED JONAH--AFTER EMERGENCY TREATMENT--TO PREVENT IDENTIFICATION!
IN WHICH CASE, THERE'S A KILLER-AT-LARGE--STILL SUFFERING A BULLET INJURY! AND IF HE LIMPED---WE'D HAVE SOME CLUE TO START ON!
GO ON, SUSAN!

"I WAS BACK IN BED, FITFULLY TRYING TO SLEEP...WHEN IT CAME! TWO HORRIBLE GUN-BLASTS DOWNSTAIRS... A DOOR SLAMMING! FEARFULLY, I RAN DOWN AND..."


I--I DIDN'T HAVE TO BE A DOCTOR TO--KNOW! HE'D DIED---INSTANTLY!
EASY, GAL! I KNOW HOW PAINFUL IT STILL IS...
AND THE--PATIENT?


"GONE...WITHOUT A TRACE! THE POLICE FOUND NOTHING...EXCEPT THE EXTRACTED BULLET FROM THE GUN-SHOT VICTIM! AND EVEN THAT...COULD ONLY BE A CLUE TO WHO SHOT HIM, NOT WHO SHOT MY HUSBAND!"

SO YOU SEE, BRUCE-- HOW FRUITLESS IT ALL IS! THAT BULLET --THE *ONLY* CLUE--DOESN'T TELL US *WHO* SHOT *JONAH!*

EXCEPT THAT THE KILLER HAD TO LEAVE AS HE CAME-- *WOUNDED!*

ANY WAY OF KNOWING--- *HOW BADLY* HE WAS SHOT? THE POLICE *MAY* BE LOOK-ING FOR A MAN ---*ALREADY DEAD!*

THERE WAS THAT *TOURNIQUET!..*

INDICATING HE WAS SHOT IN AN *EXTREMITY* --ARM OR *LEG!*

AND SINCE HE WASN'T *LIMPING* WHEN HE CAME IN--- WE'RE LOOK-ING FOR A KILLER WITH HIS *ARM* IN A *SLING!*

BUT--GO LOOK FOR AN UNKNOWN MAN WITH A SLING--AMONG EIGHT-MILLION FACELESS PEO-PLE! WOULDN'T CHECK INTO A HOSPITAL---PROBABLY HOLED UP SOMEWHERE NURSING HIS ARM, *ALONE!*

THINK OF SOMETHING, BRUCE?

THINK I BETTER TURN THIS INFO OVER TO *BATMAN*-- IT'S ABOVE *MY* HEAD! I'LL KEEP IN TOUCH, SUSAN!

PLEASE DO, BRUCE! I'M SO GRATEFUL-- FOR EVERYTHING!

MINUTES LATER, AT THE SOUND OF A DOOR OPENING...

W-WHO'S THERE?

BATMAN?! YOU-- YOU DON'T WASTE MUCH TIME, DO YOU?

NOT WHEN *TIME* IS OF THE ESSENCE, DR. FIELDING! AND MY FRIEND, BRUCE WAYNE, JUST TOLD ME THIS TRAIL IS GETTING *COLD...*

...WHAT THERE IS OF IT! I NEED *YOUR* HELP!

YOU AND BRUCE MAKE QUITE A *TEAM, BATMAN! I* NEED *HIS* HELP---AND *YOU* NEED *MINE!*

WHAT COULD I POSSIBLY DO?

DECOY YOUR HUSBAND'S KILLER--- BACK *HERE!*

W-WHAT...? IS THAT THE "HELP" YOU NEED---MY *LIFE?*

LET'S LEVEL--AND GET IT STRAIGHT! WITHOUT *YOU*--I AND THE ENTIRE POLICE FORCE--DON'T STAND A CHANCE...

...OF FINDING THE UNKNOWN ASSASSIN! HE'S BURROWED UNDER, LIKE A RAT, NURSING HIS WOUND SOMEWHERE IN THIS VAST CITY--- AND ONLY *ONE THING* WILL BRING HIM *OUT*...

THE *FEAR* THAT HE *HASN'T* KILLED THE *ONLY* WITNESS TO HIS *IDENTITY!*

B-BUT HE =SOB= *DID!* ONLY *JONAH* COULD'VE..

BUT *HE* DOESN'T *KNOW* THAT! SUPPOSE...HE GOT THE IDEA THAT *YOU* ALSO SAW HIS FACE...

...AND SOONER OR LATER, WHEN YOU GOT OVER YOUR TERROR--YOU'D *DESCRIBE* HIM TO THE POLICE?

HE'D COME *HERE*... AND DO TO *ME* WHAT HE DID TO =SOB=

PRECISELY! BUT IF I STAKE-OUT AND *WAIT* FOR HIM...

I REALIZE THERE'S SOME SMALL *RISK* INVOLVED, BUT---IF YOU *TRUST* ME?

IT--IT'S NOT *FAIR* TO LET *JONAH'S* DEATH GO-- *UNPUNISHED!*

WITH SUSAN'S GO-AHEAD, **BATMAN** WASTES NO TIME! BECOMING A MAN OF A "THOUSAND FACES"...

HEAR TELL THAT DOC'S WIFE GOT HER GLIMS ON THE JOKER WHAT PUT THE SLUG INTA HER BETTER-HALF... ***HEH!***

MAY HEAVEN SMILE ON YER, SON!

PASS THE WORD--THE GAL MEDIC IS ABOUT TO SPILL!

BLIND

TAXI

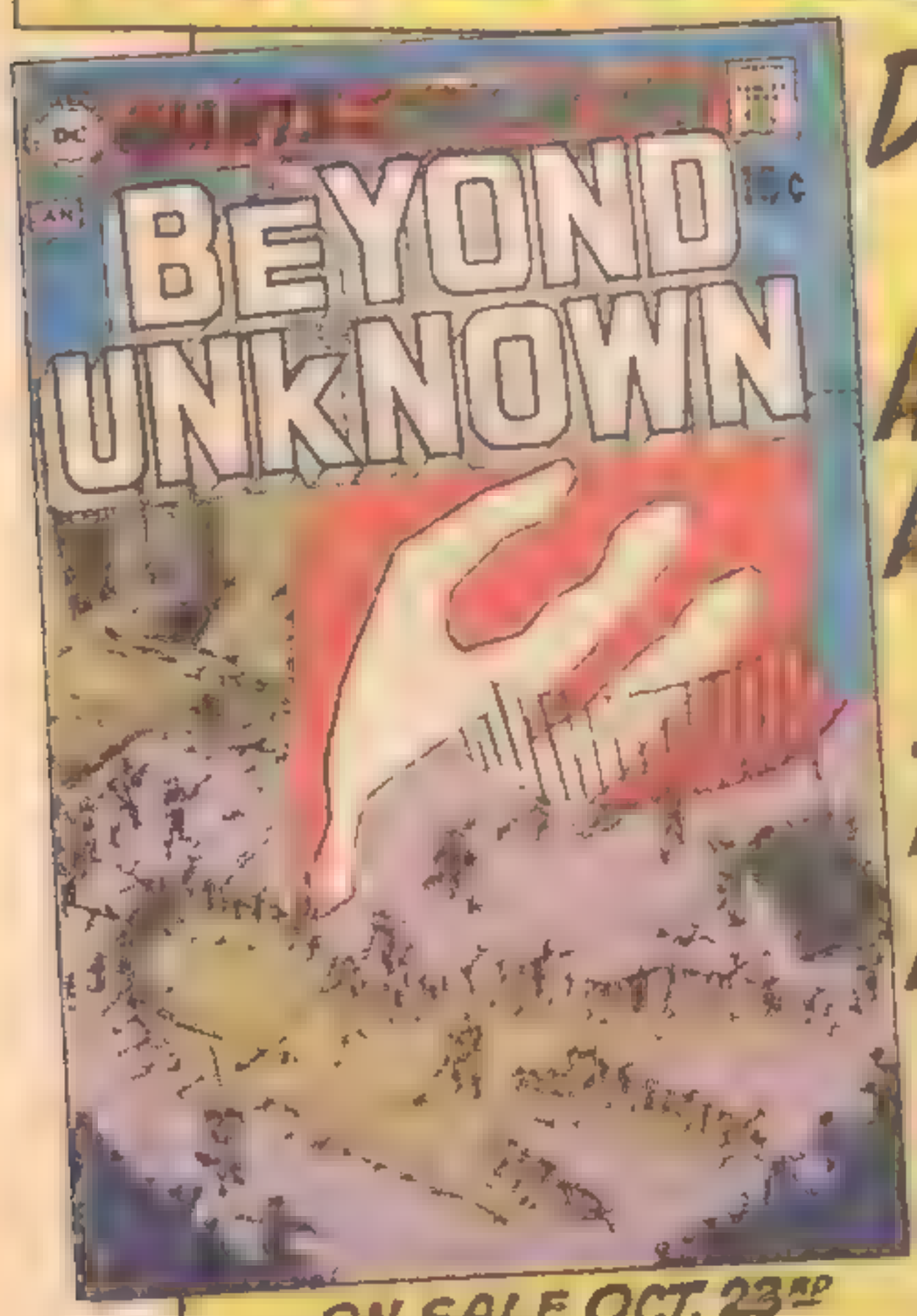
NEVER TRUST A WOMAN T'KEEP HER BIG MOUTH SHUT, BUB! Y'HEAR ABOUT THAT FIELDING BABE...

AND IN THE EARLY HOURS OF DAWN...

KNOWING THE SPEED OF THE UNDERWORLD GRAPEVINE, ALFRED-- BY TONIGHT OUR BOY SHOULD BE ***REAL*** WORRIED...

...AND I'LL BE ***WAITING*** FOR HIM!

WHO DONE IT? WHO IS IT?



DISCOVER THE AMAZING ANSWERS IN THESE LATEST DC HITS!

ON SALE OCT. 23RD

ON SALE OCT 28TH

LETTERS TO THE BATCAVE

S-294

Dear Editor:

"Batman's Marriage Trap" in issue 214 was a cute story. Not only was it cute, but it was cutesy, and even cutesy-wutsey.

Admittedly, two thousand girls would never come out of *any* woodwork, not even in *Gotham City*, to help chase after a man with only one thought—marriage—in mind, but that didn't keep the story from being cute. In fact, it made it all the more sugary-sweetly cute by its unrealistic silliness.

The story was full of cartoony, unreal, sugary-sweet, silly nonsense. *Batman* came home after a night on the town apparently worn out, yet all we true *Batman* fans know that as Bruce Wayne he may stay up all hours of the night, as he is a "playboy philanthropist" in that identity. So he would not *really* be any tireder than he is from crime-fighting, as he would be just as accustomed to nights-in-society as nights-in-fight. And we know, of course that no advertising agency worth its salt would put out the old, tired "Wanted" poster business, especially for a million-dollar customer. And, of course, we know that Commissioner Gordon would never really say something like "...there's no accounting for the (shudder) consequences!" We also know that keeping *Batman* on monitor, in one way or another, has been done at *least* twice before, and that *Robin's* decision to stay home while *Batman* would be on TV was quite out of character with previous portrayals. *Robin used* to be eager to patrol if *Batman* couldn't make it; and even if he weren't eager, certainly his sense of duty should compel him to keep an eye on things.

Still, all these inconsistencies didn't keep the story for one minute from being candy-coated cuteness clear through. It was cute when the announcer described "A Night with Batman" as one "every girl dreams of". The screeches, oohs and aahs of the bystanding girls were cute, too. And a statuesque blonde fending off dozens of clutching females to protect a "poor helpless male" couldn't be anything but *cute* if it tried to! As a matter of fact, it was the cutest story I've read all year!

I hope I managed to convey the impression I got of the story. Frank Robbins knows how to write cute stories; either that or it was a lucky fluke. But just remember that a steady diet of candy-coated cuteness can induce regurgitation, okay?

—STEVEN CARLBERG, Shreveport, La.

(Your cutesy comments were quite enjoyable—until that final cute crack! Maybe you should have cute *when you were ahead!*—Editor)

* * * * * *

Dear Editor:

This is truly incredible! "Batman's Marriage Trap" is the wildest *Batman* story I have ever seen! Until now, my favorite female in *Batman's* life has been Virginia Jenkins, another relatively new addition to the cast. But CLEO STARR...! She is, without doubt, the most gorgeous, chic, groovy-looking girl ever to grace the pages of a comic magazine! She has *got* to come back—which brings me to a more serious matter. There is a marked lack of continuity in both *Batman* and *Detective Comics.* Each issue we read a new story. There is no smooth issue-to-issue flow that makes other DC's seem to be personal life-diaries rather than a series of adventures. In other words, I'd like to see *Batman* thinking about the marriage-trap adventure (and Cleo) in some forthcoming story. Everyone thinks about the past, especially emotional events; *Batman* should, too.

Finally, I'm curious. Why did you resurrect the old cover *logo*, and has there been much of a reaction? (Or am I the only observant one around here?)

—LOREN LIEBERTHAL, New York, N.Y.

(Your complaint about our "marked lack of continuity" is dealt a severe blow with this issue's final panel lead-in to the Batman *story appearing in the December* Detective Comics*—which further ties in with the* Robin *solo adventure also featured in this issue. A typical reaction to the restoring of the old* Batman *cover-logo follows.*—Editor)

* * * * * *

Dear Editor:

What made *Batman* #214 appealing to me? First was the bringing back of the old *Batman* masthead at the top of the cover. Also on the cover was featured a Bob Kane pic of *Batman. Batgirl* was a welcome sight in this story for she rarely appears in this magazine (as contrasted to *Detective Comics* where she does the solo bit). Two things bugged me about *Batgirl*, though. On the cover her costume is badly wrinkled, or at least it appears that way. Finally, on page 9, panel 4, she is in her secret Barbara Gordon identity and has *black* hair! On page 10, *Batgirl* is blocking traffic, something *Batman* would never do, but I guess she had to play along. By the way, now that *Batman* has been given new artists and a new writer, he seems far more human and life-like.

—ROGER SCHOOLCRAFT, Follansbee, W.Va.

(The colorist who goofed up Batgirl's *hair has been given a* black *mark—which now makes him see* red! —Editor)

* * * * * *

Dear Editor:

There are some *Batman* stories that a fan's letter can't do justice to. Such was the case of "Batman's Marriage Trap!" I'm sure that it will take Frank Robbins many hours of hard concentration to ever top his work in *Batman* #214. Yet, if I were to sit and think it all out, I would never be able to fathom what actually made this yarn so good. Perhaps it was the *Caped Crusader's* human-like interest in Cleo, the one girl who didn't show her interest in him. 'Ahh, Cleo! I liked her even before she confessed to her part in the marriage trap. I think that by page 15, I was hoping that she would turn good. Thank you, Mr. Robbins, for allowing her to do so. There's something about that gal that I've missed noticing in any of the other girls who ever showed romantic interest in *Batman*.

Plot-wise, the story was a little weak. I couldn't understand what made so many of the basically good *Gotham* gals go after *Batman* the way they did. But then, I don't suppose I read the story as closely as I should have.

Batgirl's part of the story was handled perfectly—I was glad to see her appearing with *Batman* again. But here again, I have a complaint—*Batman's*-and-*Robin's* feelings toward the *Beautiful Batlady* (now where do you suppose I picked that up?). They actually believed that she had joined with those goofy gals to help put the *Caped Crusader* out of business! Shame on you, *Dynamic Duo!* If you haven't learned

to trust *Batgirl* by now, then you never will.

Art-wise, the story was as great as ever. I was glad to see Babs Gordon actually resembling Yvonne Craig (see page 9, panel 4). I hope the old "Barbara look" is gone forever.

Now, lead me to someone who didn't like *Batman* #214. I'll—I'll...

—*SCOTT GIBSON, Sterling Colo.*

(Consider yourself led to a "Fuller" brush-off man... in the next communique.—Editor)

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Dear Editor:

Well, it looks like Frank Robbins came up with a real disaster for *Batman* #214! How could he write such a *painfully* bad story after the terse, realistic masterpiece he did for *Detective Comics* #389? This issue was so horrible I wanted to chuck it in the trash.

After what happened, if I were *Batman*, I'd leave *Gotham City's* celebrity lights for *good*. I'd be fed up with being some stupid hero everyone is playing for a patsy, put to official functions, made big copy in newspapers, and the target of a "get-married" campaign no less! Where does affrontry and ridiculousness in *Gotham City* end?

—*JOHN FULLER, Goleta, Cal.*

* * * * * *

Dear Editor:

Since you all seem to have had so much fun putting *Batman* #214 together, I hate to go and spoil it all by bringing you down with the next cunning (on my part) observation. Which is: The citizens of *Gotham City* do NOT know that *Batman* isn't married! Come now, people, he certainly hasn't told them that he's still single in his alter ego. This one fact could very possibly be the one that narrows the list of *Batman* identity-suspects down to millionaire Bruce *Wayne* himself! In fact, as I type these very words I am confident that this issue's entire concept has got to be Ye Ed's biggest mistake since *Elongated Man's* costume appeared all-yellow (which was likened in a lettercol to being your biggest mistake since something else).

All the issue's other mistakes were not quite so blaring or obvious; yet there, nonetheless. For instance, the sudden shock-reappearance of that antiquated, antediluvian cover logo. That was a *real* mistake. As for another mistake... you've received and printed so many letters demanding a mysterious *Batman*-of-the-night that I'm surprised you would consider using a story in which he appears on TV—and in a Dating Game-like format yet! Besides, if *Batman* were truly a *Bat-man*, few girls would swoon over his appearance...they'd faint with fright!

When I last saw Barbara Gordon (which was a week ago when *Detective* #389 went on sale) she was a ravishing long-red-haired beauty. Suddenly she has short black hair, is as flat-chested as a 1940's *Wonder Woman* and her *Batgirl* costume fits her like an out-of-shape drape. Apparently this issue's beauty quota was meant to be filled by Cleo Starr, who came off as the only really good feature of the magazine. I'd like to see her return some day, despite her sob scene on pages 21-22, which was so *camp* I expected to hear Adam West's mahagony voice intoning: "The poor, deluded girl! If only she could have used her beauty for...niceness..."

—*STEVE BERRY, Alma, Mich.*

(It seems to us that after 30-plus-years (comicdom time) of well-publicized activity in Gotham City *that* Batman's *non-marital status has been pretty much taken for granted by the intelligentsia of that sophisticated metropolis. Accordingly, we're rejecting that "biggest mistake" tag you've pinned on us.*—Editor)

* * * * * *

Dear Editor:

I've just finished reading issue 214's "Batman's Marriage Trap." The story was great, the art and dialogue were great, but Miss Cleo Starr was (to put it mildly) simply terrific. Based on the strategy she used to trap *Batman* and her fighting ability, which was wonderfully demonstrated, she would make a great detective. I'm all in favor of her being brought back and possibly becoming a regular in *Detective Comics*. If that happens you've got yourself a reader for life.

—*RICKEY JOHNSON, Mt. Vernon, N.Y.*

(And if that Cleo-happening materialized, you'd have a disgruntled Batgirl *who presently occupies (alternately with* Robin*) the back-up story spot in* Detective Comics!—Editor)

* * * * * *

Dear Editor:

Thanks for keeping word balloons off the cover of *Batman* #214! Now if you can just keep it up...!

As for going back to the old logo, I don't really mind, although I liked the other one better.

I find it difficult to believe that a million women would mob over *Batman* the way they did in "Batman's Marriage Trap." Here are a bunch of responsible, adult women acting like a mob of teeny-boppers! What sort of wives do the married men have if this is what they are like when they're single?

But since I hate to ruin a story (especially since I liked this one for some reason), I'll try to explain *Gotham's* female behavior. The girls *admired* the *Caped Crusader*. However, they were stirred up and set off in this *W.E.B.* thing, just as Hitler whipped everyone into a frenzy towards his cause.

The crazy girls' humor, Strack's betrayal, his original idea for putting *Batman* out of circulation, and the man who has spurned marriage so often falling in love with a woman who was part of a plot against him, all added together to produce an enjoyable story.

I just think that *Batman* threw Cleo from his lovelife too quickly, just because she made a mistake in life. She honestly repented and reformed. If there is love, what else matters? The past is past; bygones should be bygones.

—*JOE RUSNAK, Montiville, N.J.*

* * * * * *

Dear Editor:

My husband brings home comic magazines to our six children and I just happened to sit down to *Batman* #214—and didn't realize until almost the end of "Batman's Marriage Trap" that you had my maiden name in it for one of the crooks. I wrote to my mother about it, she lives in Arizona, and we had a good laugh over it. I am a person who likes to write to people about things and my husband calls me the great letter writer. I just thought I would bring this to your attention.

—*JOAN (STRACK) ONISZKO, Brooklyn, N.Y.*

(This is one case of a story being STRACKED in your favor!—Editor)

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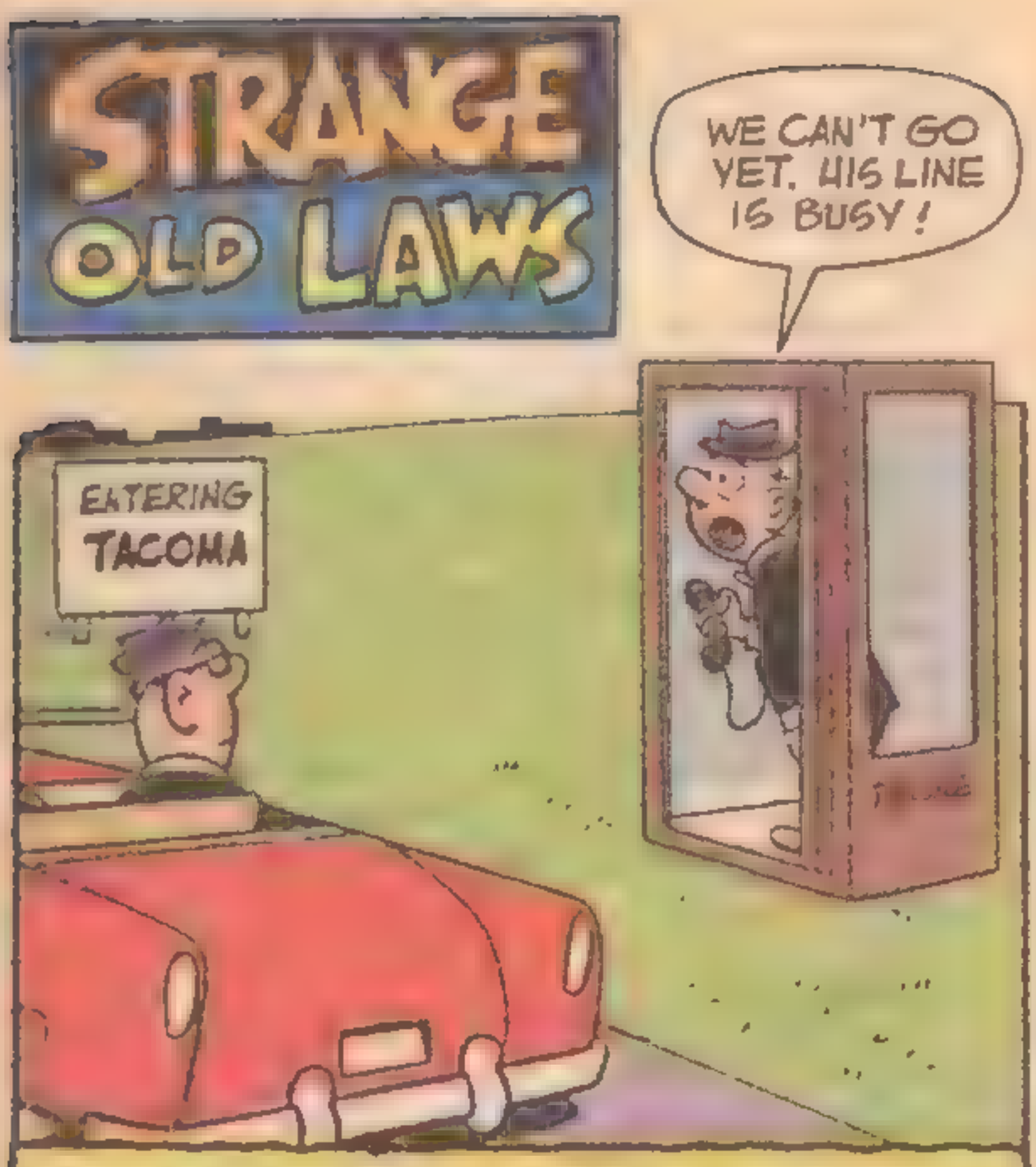
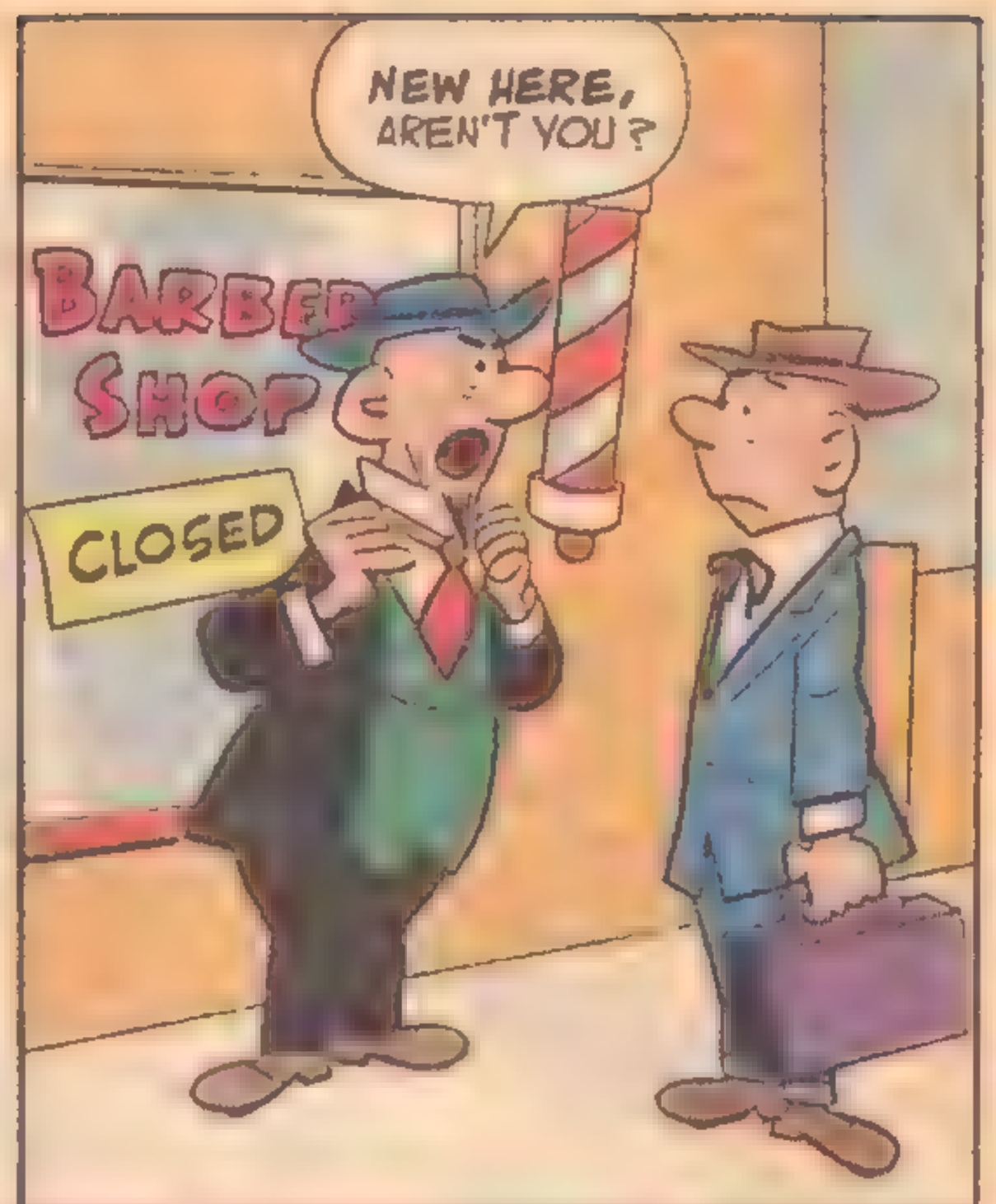
Address communications to LETTERS TO THE BATCAVE, National Periodical Publications, 909 Third Ave., New York, N.Y., 10022.

STRANGE OLD LAWS



ANY MOTORIST ENTERING TACOMA, WASH., HAD TO STOP OUTSIDE THE CITY LIMITS AND PHONE THE CHIEF OF POLICE TO TELL HIM HE WAS ARRIVING.



AN OLD LAW IN BRAINERD, MINN., REQUIRED ALL MALE CITIZENS TO GROW A BEARD.

CHARLESTON, S.C., PRISONERS WERE CHARGED ONE DOLLAR FOR THE RIDE TO JAIL IN THE PATROL WAGON.

BOSTON, MASS., ONCE HAD A LAW FORBIDDING ANYONE TO OWN A DOG MORE THAN 10 INCHES IN WEIGHT

THAT NIGHT...

UP HERE I'VE GOT GOOD COVERAGE OF *ALL* APPROACHES TO DR. FIELDING'S OFFICE! AND CAN'T *MISS* A MAN WITH A *SLING!*

HOURS OF PATIENT WAITING LATER...

THAT'S THE LAST OF SUSAN'S APPOINTMENTS FOR TONIGHT--KEPT AN ACCURATE HEAD-COUNT AS THEY WENT IN!

WHICH UNDOUBTEDLY THE KILLER DID *TOO*--- WHEREVER HE'S HIDING!

HE'S GOT TO MAKE HIS MOVE SOON--- WHEN HE'S SURE SHE'LL BE *ALONE!*

WHO'S THIS...?

SORRY TO COME SO LATE, DOCTOR-- BUT MY LITTLE BOY---

GUESS NATURE DOESN'T KEEP DOCTOR'S HOURS, EH? COME IN...

JUST ANOTHER LI'L PATIENT-- AND HIS PA SURE HAS NO SLING!

IN HERE, PLEASE...

OKAY, KID--YOU GOT YOUR QUARTER! COP A WALK!

:GASP:

W...E OUTSIDE...

HA! GUESS THE KID DOESN'T TAKE TO DOCTORS VERY WELL...EVEN PRETTY ONES...

HOLD IT! THAT BOY IS KIND OF DOWN-AT-THE HEEL TO HAVE SUCH A WELL-DRESSED... "FATHER"?

Y-YOU...?

CHECK, SISTER! THE "MEMORY-TICKLER" YOU DECIDED TO REMEMBER FOR THE COPS!

ONLY NOW--YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE A SUDDEN LAPSE OF MEMORY!

BUT SUSAN SAID THE KILLER WAS A *BIG* MAN...

BETTER HAVE A LOOK-SEE!

BIG OR SMALL--- *HE'S* THE *GUNSEL!*

DOWN--- SUSAN!

W-WHA!... *BATMAN?!*

KRASH!

BUT AS THE SHAKEN KILLER TRIES TO RECOUP HIS LOSS...

WHAP

ZUNG

THANKS, SUSAN-- VERY *INCISIVE* INTERCEPTION!

ZAP!

HE'S SMALL--BUT STRONG AS AN OX! TRYING TO RAISE HIMSELF UP USING THAT SCALE! GOT TO...

BUT HIS RECEPTIVE FOE BRINGS THE MASSIVE BAR-SCALE DOWN...AND AS *BATMAN* AVERTS HIS HEAD...

CH-UNG!

NOW, WHERE WERE WE--WHEN WE WERE SO CRUDELY INTERRUPTED? OH YE-AH...

I WAS ABOUT TO---

BLA

AH

BUT EVEN AS THE GUNMAN FIRES, *BATMAN* MAKES A SACRIFICE INTERCEPT, AND...

B-BATMAN?

ARGH-H!

AND AT THAT MOMENT...

SO I GOT *BATMAN FIRST!* TOUGH, SISTER--- YOU STILL GET IT...

HEY, WHAT'S THAT...?!

SOME SNOOPY NEIGHBOR MUST'VE HEARD MY EARLIER SHOT --CALLED THE FUZZ! GOTTA LAM...

AS ONE POLICEMAN GIVES CHASE...

WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?

BATMAN...? DR. FIELDING-- IS IT BAD?

DON'T KNOW YET! BETTER RUSH HIM TO A HOSPITAL!

NEGATIVE, SUSAN! I---I WANT THIS BULLET OUT *NOW!*

B-BUT--*WHY?*

BECAUSE THIS JOLT SHOCKED ME INTO THE REALIZATION THAT...

THE WHOLE *ANSWER* TO THIS MYSTERY DEPENDS ON *IDENTIFICATION* OF THIS *BULLET!*

AND AFTER A QUICK PREPARATION...

THIS "LOCAL" MAY NOT DULL ALL THE PAIN, *BATMAN*...

NO MATTER! GET IT OUT, SUSAN--- *INTACT!*

MY... MY FIRST *DOUBT*, THAT WE WEREN'T LOOKING FOR THE *RIGHT* MAN, CAME WHEN...

WHEN...THAT *SHORT* GUNMAN TOOK THE BAIT AFTER OUR "LEAK" THAT YOU, SUSAN, COULD IDENTIFY THE "KILLER"...

YET...THE GUN-SHOT VICTIM YOU GLIMPSED WAS A "BIG" MAN!

AND...THIS SMALL JOKER WAS *HEALTHY* AND STRONG AS AN OX! NOT THE "INVALID" WE EXPECTED!

OW-TCH!

GOT IT...

YOU MEAN--THERE WERE *TWO* MEN? BUT I ONLY SAW *ONE*...

BEFORE YOU WENT BACK TO BED! BUT SUPPOSE "SHORTY" JOINED THE PARTY-- BEFORE YOUR HUSBAND WAS SHOT!

LOST HIM...! AND DIDN'T GET AN EFFECTIVE I.D.--

TOO BAD--BUT THIS SLUG MAY PUT THE FINGER ON HIM! TAKE US TO THE CRIME-LAB--- FAST!

ODD--- I END UP THE "MAN WITH HIS ARM IN A SLING"!

LATER, AT POLICE H.Q....

YEP---THEY *MATCH!* THE ONE FROM YOUR ARM, *BATMAN*--AND THE ONE WE TOOK FROM DR. FIELDING'S BODY!

ONE SLUG--BUT SUSAN HEARD *TWO* SHOTS! NOW IT ALL FALLS INTO PLACE!

GIVE ME A COMPARISON-CHECK ON THE *THIRD* BULLET! THE ONE JONAH FIELDING EXTRACTED FROM HIS GUN-SHOT "VICTIM"!

BUT WHERE DOES *THAT* FIGURE IN? *CAN'T* BE THE SAME AS THESE TWO!

A GUY DOESN'T SHOOT *HIM-SELF* ON PURPOSE BE-FORE GOING TO A DOC..?

PRECISELY!

WHEN THE BALLISTICS CHECK IS RUN...

IT *IS* THE SAME! ALL *THREE*--FROM THE *SAME* GUN! BUT THAT'S...

...IMPOSSIBLE? JUST WHAT THE *REAL* KILLER WANTED YOU TO THINK...

SO YOU'D ALL GO ON A WILD-GOOSE CHASE, HUNTING *ONE* MAN WITH HIS ARM IN A SLING! THE GUN-SHOT *VICTIM*...

...WHO MAY BE AT THE *BOTTOM* OF THE *RIVER*, WHILE "SHORTY" ROAMS *FREE!*

THE WAY I SEE IT--*TWO* THUGS HAD A FALLING OUT! "SHORTY" SHOOTS HIS PARTNER--BUT NOT GOOD ENOUGH--HE GETS AWAY! "SHORTY" FOLLOWS--CATCHES HIM IN THE DOC'S OFFICE...

...AND BLASTS THEM *BOTH!* CARRIES OFF HIS EX-BUDDY--AND DISPOSES OF HIM!

NOW WHAT "TEAM" FITS THAT VAGUE DESCRIPTION?

SURE...SURE! "*HOP*" MILLER--AND "*STUB*" SARTEL! AND BIG "*HOP*" HASN'T BEEN SEEN AROUND LATELY!

SO--DRAG THE RIVER--AND GET OUT AN ALL-POINTS ALERT FOR "*STUB*"! AND YOU'VE CLOSED THE CASE OF... "*ONE BULLET TOO MANY*"!

THE NEXT DAY...

...DUE TO **BATMAN'S** BRILLIANT DEDUCTION IN THE UNSOLVED DR. FIELDING CASE, THE REAL KILLER, **"STUB" SARTEL,** WAS CAPTURED EARLY THIS MORNING!

ONLY IT'S A SHAME HE'S FORCED **BATMAN--BRUCE WAYNE--** TO TAKE A SUDDEN "BUSINESS" TRIP, BECAUSE OF THIS ARM, ALFIE! I'VE SO MUCH TO DO!

THE WHEELS ARE ALREADY IN MOTION, SIR! YOUR **VICTIMS, INC. PROGRAM** IS OFF TO A FINE START!

SOMETIME LATER, IN HIS **FOUNDATION** OFFICE...

...SO, AS YOU CAN GATHER, DICK... BY NOW THE **V.I.P.** IS A HOWLING SUCCESS! WITH THE CRIME-WORLD DOING ALL THE HOWLING!"

BUT HIS LETTER TO DICK GRAYSON AT **HUDSON UNIVERSITY,** IS SUDDENLY INTERRUPTED BY A COMMOTION OUTSIDE...

SIR...SIR--- YOU CAN'T GO IN THERE!

OH...**NO?**

WAYNE--I'M ONE O' YORE **"VICTIMS, INC."**---AND YUH'RE THE **NEXT** ONE!

?!

IN THE DECEMBER ISSUE OF *DETECTIVE COMICS*--
"A VICTIM'S VICTIM!"

23

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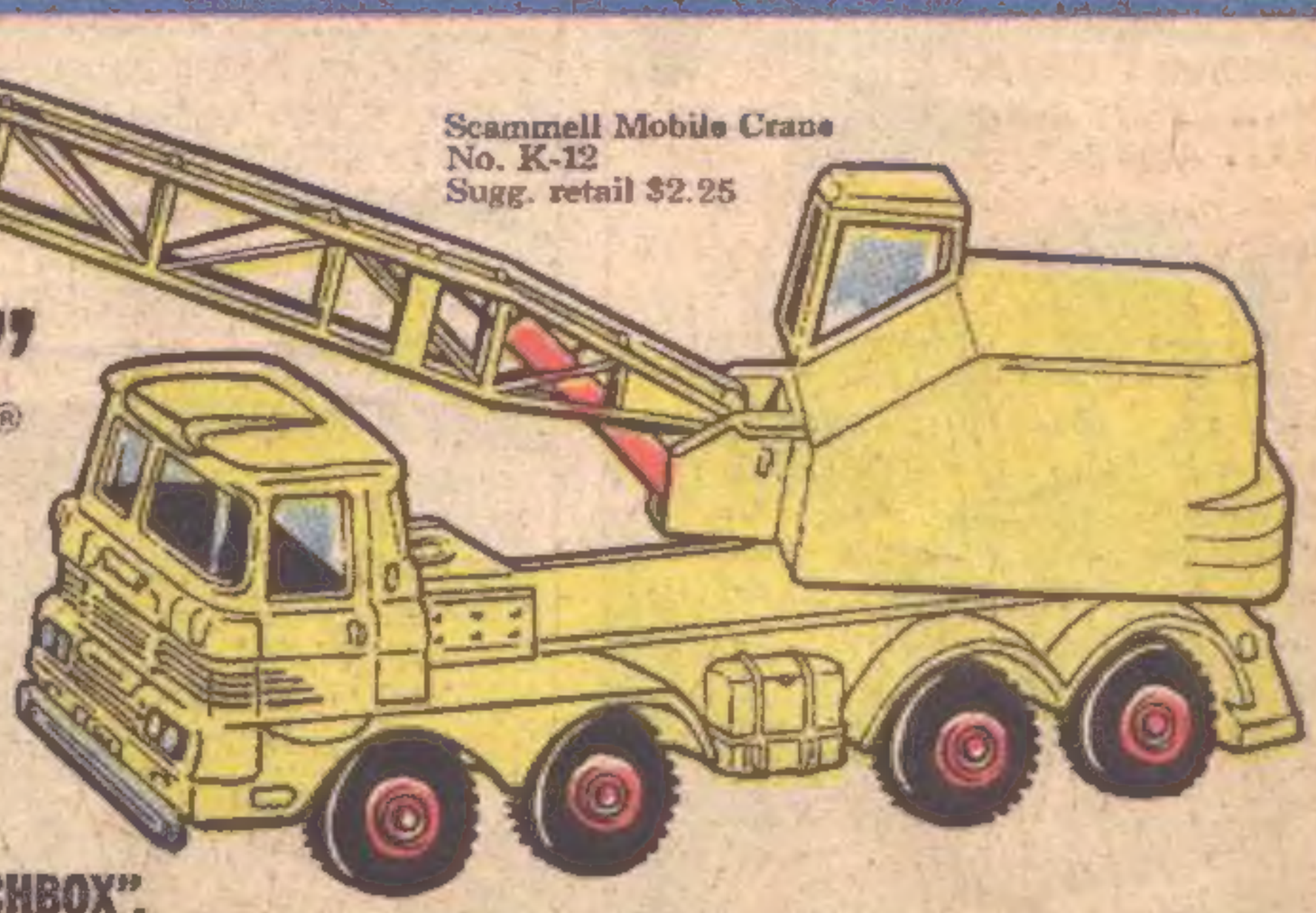

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